

month is that government funding will be gone. We have to do something about that. And we know, as we have heard all the threats by Republican Senators, that we are not going to fund the government unless something is done with Planned Parenthood. Those things take time. We have to get to that. Every day we waste here on the floor, trying to figure out what the Republicans want to do, is time that we should be spending on how we are going to fund the government.

There is no question that the Republican leader now has a very real and important decision to make. We have a lot of work to do this month. We can't afford to waste time with unnecessary procedural votes.

We also have some things we have to be involved in here that are going to slow up what we do. We have the President of China coming toward the end of the month. We have the Pope coming. We expect as many as 500,000 people here on both sides of the Capitol during the short time the Pope is here on Capitol Hill.

We have so many things to do. We need to have a path forward, as I mentioned already, to keep the Federal Government from shutting down because of a lack of funding. We need to figure out a way to keep our highway trust fund solvent, which it is not now. We need to do something about cyber security, and we need to consider important tax extenders legislation, as well as how to avoid default on the debt limit. They are all going to converge at about the same time.

Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans have very real deadlines that we must meet. We can't meet them because of the procedure in the Senate unless the Republican leader allows us to have some time on the floor. What we don't have is time to waste on Republican-contrived procedural fights that have no basis in fact or reality. It is time for Republicans to abandon their plans to slow down a vote on final passage of the Iran nuclear agreement resolution of disapproval and move on to other matters.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.J. Res. 61, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 61) amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the

employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell amendment No. 2640, of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2641 (to amendment No. 2640), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2642 (to amendment No. 2641), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2643 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2640), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2644 (to amendment No. 2643), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Foreign Relations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2645, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2646 (to the instructions) amendment No. 2645), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2647 (to amendment No. 2646), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that until 12:30 p.m. today, the time during quorum calls be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, if I might, through the Chair, if Senator CORKER would like to take his 5 minutes first, I am happy to allow that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for her tremendous courtesy, and I will actually take 1 minute.

This afternoon we are going to have a very sober and dignified debate about a foreign policy issue of huge consequence to our Nation and certainly to the world. I wish to thank Senator MCCONNELL and Senator REID for setting up a format that reflects that. I know many of my friends on the other side of the aisle have been concerned about amendments that may call for this to be a different type of debate. I would like to point out that the leader yesterday filled the tree. I just want people to know that.

I wish to thank Senator CARDIN and Senator MENENDEZ before him for the way we have all been able to work through a lot of issues that have come up. What I hope doesn't happen today is that, somehow or another, we begin referring back to incidents and trying to turn this into some type of partisan debate. We worked through August. Things happened all along the way. We worked through those. We ended up with the ability as a Congress, on an executive agreement, which we all know was meant to be implemented without any congressional involvement whatsoever, going straight to the U.N. Security Council—we all worked together to figure out a way to have this debate and then vote on the substance of this legislation.

So I want to thank my friends on both sides of the aisle. It passed over-

whelmingly—98 to 1. I think, actually, the Senator from California was absent on that day. I look forward to a very substantive debate taking place on this most important issue.

Later today, I will have longer and more formal comments to make about the substance of what was agreed to by the administration and other countries involved in the process.

I am looking forward to this. I want to say again to my friends on the other side of the aisle that I think we set this up in a manner to be a dignified, sober debate about one of the most important foreign policy issues that will come before us. Thankfully it is coming before us because we all forced it to come before us, to have this debate, and to be able to weigh in.

I yield the floor. I thank very much the Senator from California for her courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to thank my chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER, for his courtesies. We do not agree on this particular matter, but there are a lot of matters when it comes to foreign policy on which we do agree. I do agree this should be a very straightforward debate—either you are for this agreement or you are not.

I think the fact that Congress is voting on it is good. I did support that in the committee. That calls for regular order as far as the way we treat this very important vote.

I am very proud to stand here today as the longest serving member sitting on the Foreign Relations Committee today. Out of all of the members, I have been there the longest. When I got there, I did not have these gray hairs. I am not blaming any of the topics that came before us for these gray hairs; however, we have had some tough debates, and this certainly is one of them. I know my friend has a lot to do. I just want to say I was pleased to yield to him because I think he has set the right tone.

Colleagues, this is a vote we are going to long remember, a vote on an arms control agreement that came about for only one reason. That reason is, our President and his team—former Senator John Kerry, now Secretary of State; Wendy Sherman, the chief negotiator—they were part of the team, and many others worked tirelessly against the most vitriolic opposition.

The President stood firm. I want to say to him today: Thank you, Mr. President. In that race for President that you ran, you were very clear that you were going to reach out your hand and see if we could avoid another war in the Middle East. I hope and pray this Senate will give us and the world this opportunity.

As the President has said, a military option is always on the table. It is in our Constitution that the President can respond to a threat. So nothing in this agreement takes a military response off the table. But it does say